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An intersectional place perspective for AgeTech research, policy and practice

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An intersectional place perspective for AgeTech Research, policy and practice

M.L. Fang, J.S. Sixsmith, R. Woolrych

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Purpose Across the life-course, individuals are continuously relocating homes, reintegrating with places and renegotiating meanings, identities and resources that the new environment affords (Andrews, Cutchin, McCracken, Phillips & Wiles, 2007). This all-encompassing person-place unity occurs amidst fluctuating social (i.e., norms, values, expectations); political (i.e., leadership, power, influence, authority); and cultural (i.e., changing cultural beliefs and practices) landscapes. Importantly, consideration for the multi-layered aspects of place that shape notions of ‘ageing in the right place’ requires a theoretical perspective that encapsulates varying individual, community and structural factors. The theoretical work, highlighting the Intersectional Place Perspective (IPP), presented here aims to bridge this gap by merging key concepts of place theory with intersectional feminism to propagate an analytical model informed by a life-course perspective that can help reveal socially-determined and socially-centred processes, operationalised at the intersection of multiple identity(ies) and positionalit(ies) across place and time. **Method** IPP emerged from the Multi-dimensional Intersectionality Framework (MIF) by Sixsmith et al. in 2016 (Figure 1), and later progressed into the development of an Intersectional Dimensions of Differentiation Place Perspective (IDDPP) conceptualised by Sixsmith et al. in 2019 (Figure 2). Informed by Collins (2000), both theoretical models served generate ‘analytical awareness’ to challenge extant over-positivised notions of ageing-in-place, by exploring how agency is manifested by older adults in different social positions across different temporal and spatial locations. For example, in a recent affordable housing redevelopment study, application of the MIF helped enable in the analysis, the emergence of older adults’ positions in society, the identities they assumed or were imposed upon them, and the experiences of oppressions shaped by dominant socio-structural systems and policy contexts. Yet, the MIF lacked the necessary analytical ability to assess temporality and place, and sufficiently capture experiences of opportunities and oppression across varying socio-cultural, structural environments and time. Hence, IDDPP was developed to address this theoretical gap, which bridges MIF with aspects of place theory. Together, the MIF and IDDPP form the basis for an IPP. **Results and Discussion** An IPP was developed to provide a critical, analytical lens to inform the development of more inclusive age-friendly environments. Since its inception, this theoretical perspective has informed the progression of AgeTech initiatives to better understand the digital divide (Fang et al., 2019) – an area of research, policy, and practice development still requiring deeper examination into the multi-layered social factors which shape digital inequities across place and time.

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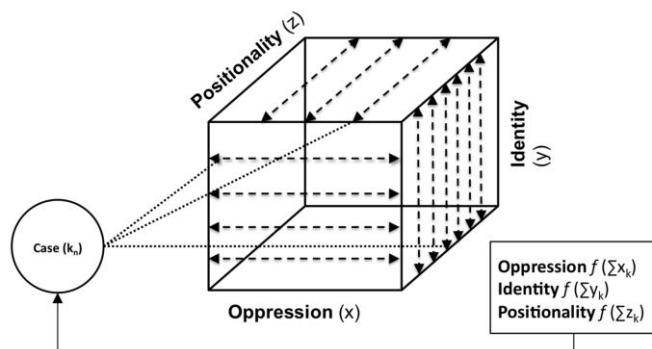


Figure 1. Framework for a Multidimensional Intersectionality Analysis.

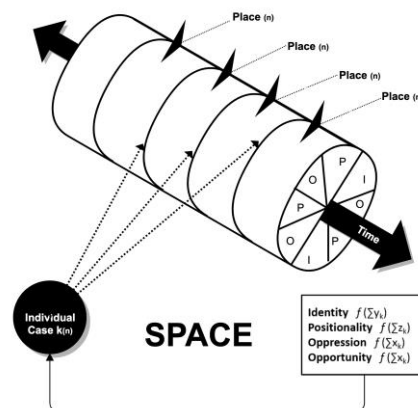


Figure 2. Illustrates an intersectional place perspective entitled the Intersectional Dimensions of Differentiation Place Perspective (IDDPP).